

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the Howard County
Department of Community Resources and Services

A Publication from the Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

Volume 8, No. 2 • February 2018

Prevention and Action for a Healthy Heart

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov), heart disease and stroke are the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. One in five adults have some form of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and more than 100 people die of CVD every hour. Of the 65 million people diagnosed with high blood pressure, 70 percent do not have it under control.

Now for some good news — you can make changes in your diet and lifestyle to lower your risks, even if you already have some form of heart disease. A 12 to 13-point reduction in systolic blood pressure (top number) can reduce your risk of a heart attack by 21 percent, and your risk of stroke by 37 percent! And, lowering your cholesterol level by just 10 percent may reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease by approximately 30 percent. The Howard County Office on Aging and Independence can help get you back on track, with programs aimed at preventing and reducing the impact of heart disease in older adults.

Prevention is – and should be – your number one goal.
Things you can do to maintain heart health at any age:

- Stay current with annual exams, screenings, and physicals.
- Get regular blood pressure screenings, and know your numbers. High blood pressure and prehypertension often have no symptoms; checking your blood pressure is the only way to know for sure whether it is too high. Take advantage of free BP screenings at Howard County 50+ centers.
- Get and stay active. Regular physical activity, especially cardiovascular or aerobic exercise, may help maintain heart health (but check with your doctor first).
- Eat a heart-healthy diet to reduce your risk of heart disease. Look online for reputable sources of nutritional guidance (like DashDiet.org or Eatright.org), or schedule a one-on-one consultation with a registered dietitian at our 50+ Centers.
- Manage stress; aerobic exercise, meditation, and yoga are great healthy ways to deal with stress. Take time to relax and make time for social activities; join a class to meet other people and stay connected.

If you have already been diagnosed with a chronic condition like high blood pressure or hypertension, don't panic. Instead, take action. Here are some ways to get started:

- Visit your healthcare provider regularly for screenings, ask for (and follow) their advice regarding diet and physical activity levels that are appropriate for you.
- Schedule time with a registered dietitian to make sure your diet is "heart healthy."
- Consult an exercise specialist at the Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) to find a program that you will enjoy and stick with.

- Visit www.howardcountymd.gov/aging to find fitness classes for all levels at your local 50+ center, or check out the Ellicott City 50+ Fitness Center for options.
- Join a peer support group to help manage stressors in your life. OAI's SeniorsTogether program offers a wide range of groups which meet regularly to discuss current events, men's issues, low vision and more. Powerful Tools for Caregivers empowers caregivers to provide better care for their loved ones while minding their own health.
- Manage your chronic conditions with the support of others who are walking the same road. Living Well: Take Charge of Your Health workshops offer a practical, self-directed approach to handle the effects of hypertension, diabetes and other chronic conditions.

For more information about these and other OAI programs, call Maryland Access Point at 410-313-1234 (voice/relay) or visit www.howardcountymd.gov/aging.

LIVING WELL WITH HYPERTENSION

Tuesday, February 13 • 1:00 to 3:30 PM

Bain 50+ Center

5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia 21044

Wednesday, February 14 • 4:30 to 7:00 PM

Howard County General Hospital

Bolduc Family Outpatient Center 1 Pavilion Classroom

5755 Cedar Lane, Columbia 21044

Friday, March 16 • 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

The Village in Howard

6061 Stevens Forest Road, Columbia 21045

Tuesday, March 20 • 1:00 to 3:30 PM

Elkridge 50+ Center

6540 Washington Blvd., Elkridge 21075

\$5 participation fee • To register, call:

Carla Johnston, Health and Wellness Coordinator
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

cjohnston@howardcountymd.gov • 410-313-3506 (VOICE/RELAY)

www.howardcountymd.gov/livingwell



Guard Against Tax ID Theft

By Rebecca Bowman, Administrator
Howard County Office of Consumer Protection

Tax season may have just begun, but identity thieves are at work all year long!

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) uses your Social Security Number (SSN) to make sure your filing is accurate and complete, and that you get any refund you are due. Unfortunately, identity thieves who access your SSN can file a phony tax return to get a refund from the IRS, and may use your SSN to get a job or claim your child as a dependent.

Theft victims usually don't find out about the crime until receiving a notice from the IRS which claims:

- IRS records (e.g. W-2 forms) showing wages received from an employer they don't know;
- more than one return was filed in your name;
- you received wages you failed to report.

While an unexpected notice or letter from the IRS may alert you that someone else is using your SSN, note that the IRS does not initiate contact with a taxpayer by sending an email, text or social media message that asks for personal or financial information. If you get such a text or email, do not reply or click on any links.

If you think someone used your SSN for a tax refund or a job, or the IRS sends you a notice or letter indicating a problem, contact the IRS immediately. Specialists will work with you to get your tax return filed, get you any refund you are due, and protect your IRS account from identity thieves in the future. Call the Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 800-908-4490; note the date of your calls and keep copies of all correspondence.

As with other types of ID theft, file a police report and check your credit report for fraudulent accounts. You can also place a fraud alert or security freeze on your credit reports.

Reduce Your Risk

- Keep your financial and tax records secure. Use strong passwords and always use security software with firewall and anti-virus protections.
- Learn to recognize and avoid phishing emails, as well as calls and texts from thieves posing as banks, credit card companies or government agencies.
- Don't click on links or download attachments in texts or emails from unknown senders.

For more information about this or other consumer issues, contact the Howard County Office of Consumer Protection by calling 410-313-6420 (voice/relay); by email consumer@howardcountymd.gov or visit us at www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer.



Find us on Facebook at
[facebook.com/HoCoCommunity](https://www.facebook.com/HoCoCommunity)

Stay connected to the DCRS. Like us today!

National Consumer Protection Week March 4-10

SHRED iD Theft!

Saturday, March 3 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

FREE Document Shredding at 11:00

East Columbia Library, 6600 Cradlerock Way, Columbia

Looking to protect yourself from fraud, identity theft and scams?

The Howard County Office of Consumer Protection is partnering with AARP and the Howard County Public Library System to present "Shred ID Theft." Learn how to select a tax preparer, find free tax prep services and avoid tax-related scams and ID theft.

Visit www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer for more details on this event and other consumer education materials.

P4C Pet Evaluations

If you are interested in volunteering, or wish to receive a FREE evaluation for your pet, contact:

Ingrid Gleysteen, PROGRAM COORDINATOR
410-313-7461 • igleysteen@howardcountymd.gov



PET EVALUATIONS: FEBRUARY 1



**Howard County
Paws4
Comfort**

Touching Hearts... One Visit at a Time

Evaluations
are held at the
Bain 50+ Center
5470 Ruth Keeton Way
Columbia 21044



Howard County Office on
Aging and Independence

Department of Community Resources and Services

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410-313-6410 (VOICE/RELAY) • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

Find us on www.facebook.com/HoCoCommunity

Kim Higdon Henry, Editor • Email: kahenry@howardcountymd.gov

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Celebrate African American History

February 2018

Meet Storyteller Janice Greene

Janice Curtis Greene is an accomplished storyteller, an American Griot, folklorist, historian, author and spiritual revivalist. Her costumed portrayals of historical African American females have delighted audiences across the United States for over 20 years, garnering her numerous awards including the Harriet Tubman Lifetime Achievement Award. Don't miss these free performances:

The Triumphs and Tragedies of Harriet Tubman

Friday, February 2 • 11:00 a.m.
Glenwood 50+ Center • Register at 410-313-5440

The Courage of Civil Rights Activist Rosa Parks

Tuesday, February 27 • 10:00 a.m.
Bain 50+ Center • Register at 410-313-7213

DID YOU KNOW?

If you have two or more chronic conditions, you may be at risk for malnutrition!

Malnutrition can cause muscle loss and dizziness, increasing your risk of falls!

STEPPING UP YOUR NUTRITION

DISCOVER AND LEARN

- **WHY** muscle matters
- **HOW** nutrition affects falls
- **HOW** to get enough protein and fluids
- **WHAT** you can do to eat better and improve your health

Wednesday, February 21
1:00 to 3:30 pm

North Laurel 50+ Center

9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel, MD 20723

\$5/person includes workshop and educational materials

To register or for more information, contact:

JEANNIE DeCRAY

jdecray@howardcountymd.gov

410-313-6535 (VOICE/RELAY)



Howard County
MARYLAND ACCESS POINT
YOUR LINK TO HEALTH & SUPPORT SERVICES

Howard County Office on
Aging and Independence
Department of Community Resources and Services

Practical Skills FOR CAREGIVERS

Useful Strategies and Skills for In-Home Care

Taught by HCC nursing instructors and staff, this five-week course will provide learners with helpful information to care for a loved one in the comfort and safety of their own home. The course will address day-to-day challenges for both the care recipient, as well as the caregiver.

Howard Community College

Health Sciences Building, Room 364
10901 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia, MD 21044

Thursdays • 5 to 8 PM | April 19 thru May 17

\$195 (includes \$160 in fees) • Course XH-599 7117

Registration opens February 15 online at howardcc.edu

For additional information or questions, contact
Kathy Wehr at kwehr@howardcountymd.gov.

AN EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

Howard County Office on
Aging and Independence
Department of Community Resources and Services



Elkridge 50+ Center Grand Re-Opening!

Monday, March 5 • 8:30 a.m.

6540 Washington Blvd., Elkridge 21075

Enjoy facility tours, health screenings and education, fitness center equipment demos, new member registration and more!

Don't miss this memorable occasion in the history of Elkridge!

Please join Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman, the Office on Aging and Independence and the Howard County Library System at the

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

FOR THE **ELKRIDGE 50+ CENTER** AND THE **ELKRIDGE LIBRARY** AND **DIY EDUCATION CENTER**

Saturday, March 10

TIME AND ADDITIONAL DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED

410-313-5192 (voice/relay)
www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

Howard County 50+ Centers SPOTLIGHT ON THE EAST COLUMBIA 50+ CENTER



www.howardcountymd.gov/50pluscenters for all 50+ Center events

Discover a world of fun at the East Columbia 50+ Center

By Meridy McCague, Director, East Columbia 50+ Center

Welcome to East Columbia 50+ Center, conveniently located inside the recently renovated East Columbia branch of the Howard County Library System on Cradlerock Way in Columbia. I think it says a lot about our center that we continued to thrive throughout the entire construction process, thanks to the support of our members and the wide variety of popular programs we offer Monday through Friday.

The East Columbia 50+ Center first opened in this location in 1994. The Center's boutique-like nature allows staff to craft programs that are flexible and responsive to the interests of our members, including offering activities during evening hours by popular request. We've always been open until 8:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays, but we recently added a legal clinic, and now offer the Language Café on Tuesday evenings as well.

Though we are small in terms of square footage, our monthly calendar of center activities offers many options for participation and enrichment. Our programs focus on three main areas of concentration:

Learning communities, such as book clubs, art classes and volunteer groups. The "Sew Who Cares" group fashions hats and scarves for shelter animals to entice prospective owners and created sleep mats made from grocery bags for the local homeless community. Our popular Clutter Buster group concentrates on living a minimalist lifestyle with monthly challenges and a lot of laughter. And, our partnership with the Columbia Association's Youth and Teen Center provides one-on-one technology instruction, as well as a monthly Tech Café, so our members can get help with phone, tablet and laptop issues from our teen tech specialists.

Group socialization at East Columbia supports meeting others with similar interests, so whether you enjoy chess, cards, or mahjong, you will find a comfortable "home away from home" atmosphere while spending time with friends old and new. There's nothing better than a warm afternoon tea to stimulate great conversation! The welcoming community you will find at the East Columbia 50+ Center is also enhanced by the diversity of our membership.

Physical fitness options offered at the Center include traditional aerobic exercise classes such as strength training and yoga, and dance classes from soul line to ballroom. There is a strong concentration of Qigong and Tai Chi options which include plenty of practice sessions and learning opportunities.

Recently, we have been celebrating the accomplishments of our Tai Chi students who traveled to China to compete. Seventeen students made the trip, accompanied by their instructor, Jao Ping Mao, returning with great stories to share - plus three trophies and 50 gold medals! (See the article on the front page of the Beacon's February issue for more about the Tai Chi group's trip to China). Join us to celebrate their accomplishments at our Chinese New Year event on Thursday, February 8 featuring the Jow Ga Lion Head performance at 6:00 p.m.



Laurie Anderson leads the Latin Jam Happy Hour at the East Columbia 50+ Center.

Commitment to excellence defines how the staff at East Columbia works to support its members and programs. We are always looking for new avenues for you to explore and adventures to pursue. Drop in, meet our team and let us help you find the right program to bring good health, happiness or a renewed sense of purpose to your life. For more information, contact us at 410-313-7680 or eastcolumbia50plus@howardcountymd.gov.

- Consult an exercise specialist at the Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) to find a program that you will enjoy and stick with.
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